

Minutes: Early Childhood Interagency Coordinating Council (ECICC)

August 25, 2006 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

The Cornhusker Marriott Hotel, Lancaster Room 1-2-3

Lincoln, Nebraska

Denise Wright, chair, opened the meeting of the Early Childhood Interagency Coordinating Council on August 25, 2006 at 9:00 a.m. at the Cornhusker Marriott Hotel, Lincoln, Nebraska.

Members present: A.Kathryn Anderson, Michelle Bartlett, Kimberly J. Chase, Eric Dunning, Kris Elmshaeuser, Mary Fran Flood, Louise Hall-Mountain, Kathy Halverson-Rigatuso, Sally Hansen, Mary Jo Iwan, Barbara Jackson, Marjorie Kostelnik, Terri Lewis, Kim Madsen, Betty Medinger, Ruth Miller, Tammy Mittelstaedt, Sue Obermiller, Mary Phillips, Mary Alice Queen, Todd Reckling, Barbara Schliesser, Connie Shonka, Carey Winkler, Carolyn Witte, Denise Wright, Linda Zinke

Members absent: Sue Adams, Mary A Frank, Christine Carr, Marcia Corr, Paul Matson, Sali Gale, LeaAnn Johnson, Cindy Prater, Roger Reikofski, DiAnna Schimek, Susan Kringle, Joyce Thomas, Patti Waltman, Derek Weimer

Also in attendance:

Technical Assistants: Rae Anderson, *National Child Care Information Center*; Nina Baker, *PTI-Nebraska*; Mark Smith, *Munroe Meyer Institute*; *Early Childhood Training Center:* Carol Fichter; *HHSS*—Lynne Brehm, Linda Shandera, Micaela Swigle, Pat Urzedowski (A.M.); *NDE*—Judy Fricke, Melody Hobson, Jeanine Huntoon, Eleanor Kirkland, Joan Luebbers; *ECICC Staff:* Terry Rohren, facilitator; Susan Dahm, secretary, Martha Gadberry, facilitator-GBC; *Guests:* Jenny Kronberg, *intern, Munroe-Meyer Institute.*

AGENDA:

I. Opening and Announcements:

- Denise Wright, chair, announced changes to the agenda and the posting of the Public Meeting Act.
- Denise recognized retiring Council members Sally Hansen, Sue Obermiller, Cindy Prater, and Patti Waltman, whose terms end on September 30, 2006. Denise reviewed and commented on “where we were” and “where we are now” from her perspective after serving on the Council since 1997.
 - Carey Winkler, representing the Family Leadership Team, recognized retiring members with cards, and a gift for Denise Wright, retiring member and chair. [Denise’s term also ends on September 30.]
- Denise welcomed Louise Hall-Mountain to her first meeting upon being appointed to represent mental health as a member of the ECICC.
- Actions since the last meeting:
 - Denise reviewed the July 31 meeting with the Governor, which she attended along with Michelle Bartlett, Ruth Miller, Derek Weimer, and Carey Winkler. She said the ECICC representatives considered the meeting to be very positive. The representatives commented on their discussions and the recommendations that Governor Heineman made, which included:
 - 1) Promoting the *Nebraska Early Learning Guidelines* to school boards, superintendents, and principals, perhaps with a feature article in the Nebraska School Board Association newsletter.

- 2) Considering holding at least one ECICC meeting per year outside of Lincoln or Omaha in consideration and appreciation for the members and the general public outside of the metropolitan areas.
- 3) Expressing appreciation for the yearly meeting with ECICC representatives and proposing similar future communication with the Council.

Action:

- Kim Madsen proposed that ECICC support the Governor's recommendations, especially regarding providing information about the *Early Learning Guidelines* and other initiatives, such as Results Matter, to school boards, elementary principals, parents, and the general public. Ruth Miller suggested ways to inform school boards.
- Terry Rohren will work with the state agencies about providing information to principals and schools boards.
- Connie Shonka asked for a follow up report on actions taken.
- Terry Rohren thanked Council members for their participation in the 2006 ECICC Self-Assessment Survey. She provided handouts of compiled results and a list of key findings to be discussed during the afternoon agenda.
- *Action*—Approval of minutes:
Motion, seconded: To approve the ECICC minutes of May 19, 2006, as submitted and provided to members in the pre-meeting packet. There was no discussion. The motion to approve the minutes passed by unanimous voice vote. There were no abstentions.

II. Family story

Due to unexpected circumstances, the scheduled presenter for the family story on autism spectrum disorder was unable to attend the meeting.

III. Guided discussion: Possible change to working order of the Council agenda.

Council members worked individually and then in small groups to develop ideas on ways to accommodate the different meeting-time needs of the various Council working groups, specifically, the extended time needed for the Gaps and Barriers Committee (GBC) versus the shorter time required for the Family Leadership Team, the Legislation and Communication Committee, and the task force groups. Terry Rohren led a discussion of ideas generated by the small groups.

Action:

There was agreement to try staggered start times for the small group work sessions, which would take place before the regular Council meeting. The Steering Committee will discuss the process and inform Council members of changes to the meeting structure before the next meeting. Denise commented that they should also look at what options the budget could support and how the composition and focus of the GBC might be restructured.

IV. Committees/Working groups

Members and technical assistants met from 10:10 a.m. to 12:10 p.m. in three breakout groups: the Gaps and Barriers Committee, the Legislative and Communications Committee, and the Financing Task Force. The Family Leadership Team had met at 8:00 a.m. before the ECICC meeting.

*** Working Lunch**

During lunch Laura Maddox, state autism coordinator from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, provided information about groups to support parents of children with autism spectrum disorder and answered questions. More information may be found at <http://www.nde.state.ne.us/autism>.

V. Public Comment

- Nina Baker distributed materials from PTI-Nebraska and handouts she distributed:
 - Alphabet Soup—a regularly updated list of acronyms related to early childhood and children with disabilities
 - A Parent's Guide to Nebraska Rule 51, which is available on the PTI-Nebraska website
 - Increasing Parent Involvement on Special Education and Disability-Related Interagency Committees, Councils, and Boards
 - A PTI-Nebraska audio CD of important things that parents of children with disabilities should know.

Persons interested in the documents and the CD should contact Nina— phone: (888) 490-9233; e-mail: nbaker@pti-nebraska.org.

VI. Reports from Working Sessions**A. Family Leadership Team**

Tammy Mittelstaedt reported on items discussed in the Family Leadership Team meeting, which included:

- The Results Matter brochure and related issues—Nina Baker is working with the team to draft family-friendly information for parents about Results Matter.
- Advocacy training provided through the Munroe-Meyers Institute—Mark Smith is the primary investigator for the initiative. The team is encouraging others to attend the training, especially parents. Persons interested in the next free trainings, which will be offered on September 9 and 16 at Quarry Oaks golf course, should contact Mark Smith.
- Special Education Law Conference—Sessions for Nebraska parents of children with disabilities will be held in Omaha on Friday evening, November 10, and all day Saturday, November 11, 2006. Interested persons should contact Nina Baker or PTI-Nebraska for registration information.

B. Gaps and Barrier Committee (GBC)

- Sue Obermiller brought two recommendations from the Gaps and Barriers Committee:
 - 1) That Martha Gadberry, outside facilitator for the GBC, be allowed to sit in on the Steering Committee conference calls for the purpose of agenda planning for the GBC.
 - 2) To accept Carey Winkler as the new chair and Mary Phillips as the new co-chair of the Gaps and Barriers Committee. [Sue Obermiller, who has served as chair for the past two years, is retiring from the ECICC.]

Action:

Motion, seconded: To accept the two recommendations from the GBC. The motion carried by unanimous voice vote.

- Sue reported that the committee had discussed the time needed to conduct their business and noted that there was consensus among committee members that 2 hours would still be needed to complete the committee's work. In addition, members felt that occasionally a ½ to 1-day meeting might be necessary for special topics and/or strategic planning.
- Sue reported that an on-going concern of the GBC was how to best communicate information about local gaps and barriers from Planning Region Teams to the GBC.

C. Financing Task Force

- Ruth Miller reported for the Financing Task Force and informed the Council that they had reviewed a draft of five sections of Eric Thompson's report on the economic impact of child care in Nebraska. They are anticipating that the final report will be ready for the

November 17, 2006 meeting and recommended that Eric be invited to present his report at that meeting.

Action:

There was consensus to accept the recommendation to put Eric Thompson on the November 17 ECICC meeting agenda.

- The task force is considering various methods on how to best “roll out” the report.

D. Legislative and Communications Committee (LCC)

Kathy Anderson reported that the LCC had recommendations in two primary areas of focus and one new area of concern: follow up to the meeting with the Governor; informing new senators in the Nebraska Legislature about the work of the ECICC; and, certifying highly qualified teachers. The recommendations were discussed, questions were addressed, and suggestions added.

- As follow up to the meeting with the Governor, the LCC proposed two recommendations:

- 1) That the ECICC encourage the Nebraska Department of Education to supplement the *Early Learning Guidelines (ELG)* with a tool or method to assist education administrators, superintendents and school board members to understand the ELG and policy-making and administration as it relates to early childhood programs. In addition, they suggested that a similar tool be developed for parents, perhaps linking it to *First Connections*.

Discussion:

Concern was expressed about financing such an initiative and the impact it might have on other priorities. An alternative suggestion was made that a small group be assembled to explore ways to implement the ELG with a variety of education groups and the general public.

Action:

A voice vote indicated consensus to accept the recommendation with the addition to include the formation of a small working group to evaluate ways to implement the ELG with school officials and the general public.

- 2) That at least one meeting of the ECICC be held in the central or western part of the state.

Discussion:

Marjorie Kostelnik proposed that rather than having a regular working meeting, the goal of this meeting be to conduct listening sessions in an effort to broaden input to the ECICC.

Action:

A voice vote indicated consensus to refer the recommendation to the Steering Committee requesting them to examine the feasibility of holding one meeting in a location outside of Lincoln or Omaha, to devise a plan to incorporate listening sessions with targeted groups invited to the meeting, to explore possible ways to incorporate the meeting with other functions, and to bring the ideas back to the Council.

- Regarding providing information to new state legislators, the LCC made two recommendations:

- 1) Developing a packet of information about early childhood and the ECICC, with descriptions of roles and responsibilities, funding streams, the biennial report to the Governor, the economic impact study, etc.

- 2) Arranging and participating in a function hosted by a state senator and inviting representatives from the Nebraska Department of Education (NDE) and the Health and Human Services System (HHSS). A late February function was suggested.

Discussion:

Concern was expressed regarding ECICC limitations for working with the Legislature and caution was given that the role of advocacy should more appropriately be up to NDE, HHSS, and organizations such as the Early Childhood Coalition. It was clarified that the committee's intent would be to inform legislators about the ECICC and would not duplicate HHSS and NDE activities.

Action:

- A voice vote indicated consensus to accept the recommendation to provide a packet of information to new state legislators, with the restriction that the information be limited to information about the ECICC, which could include reports generated by the ECICC.
 - No action was taken on the recommendation for arranging a function with new state legislators.
- Regarding the certification of Highly Qualified Teachers:
Marjorie Kostelnik informed the Council about the federal requirement to identify highly qualified teachers and an NDE proposal to use the Praxis exam to certify highly qualified teachers in Nebraska. She suggested that methods to identify/certify highly qualified teachers should include early childhood qualifications and that the Praxis exam may not be the best for this purpose. She proposed a small special issues task force from the ECICC be formed to look at alternatives to the Praxis exam and to bring their recommendations to the ECICC, which would follow up with the NDE Certification Office.

Action:

A group consisting of ECICC members Kathy Halverson-Rigatuso, Kim Chase, Barb Schliesser, Marcia Corr, and Michelle Bartlett, volunteered to work with NDE's Marilyn Peterson and Diane Stuehmer to identify alternatives to the Praxis exam and report their recommendations at the November 17, 2006 ECICC meeting.

IX. ECICC 2006 Self Assessment

Terry Rohren reported that out of 41 surveys sent to ECICC members, 24 were returned. She thanked Barb Jackson for analyzing the surveys. Terry highlighted the findings, which were good overall. She noted that opportunities for improvement included: developing partnerships with public and private sectors; adding business representatives to the ECICC membership; developing mechanisms to identify gaps and barriers in early childhood programs and services; providing information to help understand the context of legislative actions; and maintaining regular communication with policy makers about early childhood and ECICC.

X. Results Matter/Family Survey

Barb Schliesser updated Council members on the status of Results Matter. She reminded them that Results Matter has two parts: assessment/measurement and the family survey.

- Assessment
 - Barb Jackson provided an overview of the trainings on the assessment tools, building the capacity of trainers already trained (training of trainers), and resources for using on-line systems to report assessment. The next step will be to link assessment to curriculum.
 - Barb Schliesser noted that collection of assessments for all children with disabilities and those in state-funded early childhood programs will begin in January of 2007. The information that is collected will be reported in the 2008 Annual Performance Report

(APR) to OSEP (Office of Special Education Programs). The state is also required to report the information by school district to the public.

- Family survey:
 - Barb Schliesser reported that the required family survey for IDEA-Part C (children with disabilities aged birth to three) is currently being conducted, with a return deadline of September 20. Results will be reported in the February 2007 APR and to Planning Region Teams. The survey has been given to all families in Part C in an attempt to establish a baseline of data.
 - The Co-Leads will report preliminary information from the survey at the November 17 ECICC meeting, if it is available.

XI. Child Obesity Notebooks

Diane Lewis, Nebraska Health and Human Services System (HHSS), presented information on *Eat Smart, Great Start*. The initiative is supported by several funding sources and has tapped a broad advisory committee to develop nutrition guidelines for early childhood providers. The resulting “child obesity notebooks” cover proper nutrition, recipes, games and exercise ideas, websites, etc. Returned evaluation cards show a positive response to the resource. Some in-service training credit is being offered in connection with the initiative.

X. Assistive Technology for Housing

Lauren Shafenberg, a housing resource specialist from NDE Vocational Rehabilitative/Assistive Technology, presented information about a new resource to help locate accessible, affordable housing in Nebraska for people with disabilities. The website, <http://www.housing.ne.gov>, operates in real time and provides information about accessibility features and willingness to make modifications in rental and sale properties. Lauren noted that searches can identify gaps in housing issues. Lauren also helps to locate resources to assist with funding/loans and other housing ownership and rental issues.

Lauren also informed the group about www.at4all.com, a website to provide assistance in locating needed assistive technology items. Persons with items that are no longer being used may use the website to offer the items to others.

Lauren answered questions and took comments from the group.

XI. Power of Documentation exhibit.

Julie Jones-Branch, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, informed the Council about the exhibit, “The Power of Documentation: Children’s Learning Revealed.” The museum-quality exhibit was created by the Chicago Metro Association for the Education of Young Children and the Chicago Children’s Museum, and is at the Lincoln Children’s Museum from May 5 to September 7, 2006. Julie worked with NDE and the Early Childhood Training Center (ECTC) to provide trainings for nearly 300 early childhood educators during the exhibit’s time in Lincoln. Those involved in the project would like to see a similar exhibit developed to represent Nebraska. She asked the group for ideas and feedback about whether such an exhibit would be feasible using similar methods for documenting Nebraska children’s learning with photos, dialogue, and quotes from children and teachers. Council members offered several ideas and Julie invited persons who are interested in being part of initial planning efforts to contact her.

XII. Other

- Mary Jo Iwan called attention to brochures for a National Respite Conference, which she distributed. Denise Wright reminded Council members that Planning Region Teams can help fund getting people to the conference.

- Terry Rohren said she is working on the draft for the ECICC's biennial report to the Governor and would provide copies before the November meeting, if possible.

The Council adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

Next meeting: November 17, 2006, time to be announced.

MEETING HANDOUTS:

- ✓ Roster Updates: August 25, 2006
- ✓ ECICC Discussion Issue: August 25, 2006
- ✓ ECICC 2006 Member Self-Assessment Survey [results].
- ✓ Information sheet: Key Findings from the ECICC 2006 Self-Assessment
- ✓ Minutes: ECICC Gaps and Barriers Committee, May 19, 2006
- ✓ Nebraska Head Start State Collaboration Office: Quarterly Report for period 1/1/2006-6/30/2006
- ✓ Overview of LB 1256 and LB 1006: Birth-to-3 Endowment–Services for At-Risk Children
- ✓ Information sheet: A Parent's Guide to Nebraska's Rule 51 (Rule dates May 13, 2006)
- ✓ Information sheet: Alphabet Soup Made Palatable (8/24/2006)
- ✓ Brochure: Do You Know A Child With Autism? Facts, Information, Resources
- ✓ Booklet: Next Steps–A Guide for Families New to Autism Spectrum Disorders
- ✓ Information sheet: Increasing Parent Involvement on Special Education and Disability-Related Interagency Committees, Councils and Boards
- ✓ Brochure: AT 4 All
- ✓ Brochure: Discover the Benefit of Technology
- ✓ Brochure: www.housing.ne.gov
- ✓ Brochure: The Power of Documentation–Children's Learning Revealed
- ✓ Notes: The Power of Documentation–Children's Learning Revealed: An Early Childhood Project for Nebraska Department of Education
- ✓ Brochure: Blazing Trails for Caregiving–2006 Annual National Respite and Caregiving Conference